

## Message Text

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /011 W

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R 220135Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO USIA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 9679

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

UNCLAS WELLINGTON 01442

USIAC

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION

FOR: IOP, IPS, IBS

1. THE WAIKATO TIMES (CIRC 37,771), UNDER THE HEADING "THAIS' UNHAPPY PLIGHT" MADE THE FOLLOWING EDITORIAL COMMENTS ON MAY 17:

2. "THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT WAS A CLEAR WARNING TO CAMBODIA'S EBULLIENT NEW REGIME THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS BACK-PEDALLED ABOUT AS FAR AS IT IS GOING TO. AND IT HIGHLIGHTED THAILAND'S UNEASY ROLE AS THE MEAT IN THE SOUTH-EAST ASIAN SANDWICH.

3. "JUST WHAT THE CAMBODIAN AUTHORITIES HOPED TO ACHIEVE BY SEIZING WHAT SEEMS CLEARLY TO BE NOTHING MORE SINISTER THAN AN ORDINARY MERCHANT SHIP WE WILL PROBABLY NEVER KNOW, BUT IT IS A FAIRLY REASONABLE INFERENCE THAT THAILAND FIGURES IN THEIR THINKING SOMEWHERE.

4. "IN ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES THE SEIZURE OF A CARGO SHIP WOULD NOT SPARK OFF A LARGE-SCALE ARMED RESCUE OPERATION. BUT THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE NOT ORDINARY AND THE UNITED STATES, WHICH HAS BEEN CONSISTENTLY SUFFERING REVERSES IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA SINCE THE SIGNING OF THE VIETNAM 'PEACE AGREEMENT' IN PARIS, HAD NO REAL ALTERNATIVE.

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MENT' IN PARIS, HAD NO REAL ALTERNATIVE.

5. "TH ONLY THING THEY DID WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A MIS-JUDGEMENT WAS TO MOUNT THE RESCUE OPERATON THROUGH THAILAND. AN EMPHATIC PROTEST FROM THAILAND BROUGHT A PROMPT CHANGE IN STRATEGY - BUT THE FACT REMAINS THAT THE UNITED STATES EMBARKED ON WHAT TECHNICALLY WAS AN ACT OF WAR AGAINST ONE OF THAILAND'S NEIGHBOURS FROM THAI SOIL.

6. "UNTIL THINGS BEGAN TO GO AGAINST THE UNITED STATES WITH A VENGEANCE IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA THAILAND WAS PREPARED TO TOLERATE AN AMERICAN PRESENCE ON THAI SOIL. NOW IT IS A DIFFERENT STORY. THE 'BUFFERS' AGAINST THE SPREAD OF COMMUNISM TO HER BORDERS HAVE EITHER TUMBLED OR ARE TUMBLING AND THE UNITED STATES PRESENCE, ONCE A COMFORT, IS NOW AN EMBARRASSMENT.

7. "THAILAND WANTS TO COME TO TERMS WITH HER NEW NEIGHBOURS BUT IS BEING SNIPED AT FROM ALL SIDES - FOR ALLOWING THE AMERICANS TO REMOVE WARPLANES FLOWN TO THAILAND AHEAD OF THE ADVANCING COMMUNISTS, FOR PERMITTING THEM TO LAUNCH THE MAYAGUEZ 'CHERRY-PICKING' OPERATION, FOR JUST ALLOWING THEM TO REMAIN THERE ....

8. "IF THE MAYAGUEZ WAS PIRATED TO TEST AMERICAN REACTION THE CAMBODIAN GOVERNMENT HAS GOT ITS ANSWER, FAIR WARNING OF WHAT IT CAN EXPECT IF IT LETS ITSELF GET CARRIED AWAY BY THE EXUBERANCE GENERATED BY COMMUNIST GAINS IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA.

9. "THE INCIDENT HAS BROUGHT AN ENRAGED REACTION FROM COMMUNIST AND COMMUNIST-ALIGNED NATIONS, WHICH WAS TO BE EXPECTED. REACTION ELSEWHERE HAS RANGED FROM NONE TO CAUTIONS ENDORSEMENT TO PRAISE. GENERALLY, PRESIDENT FORD HAS EMERGED FROM HIS FIRST REAL TRIAL OF STRENGTH ON THE INTERNATIONAL SCENE WITH HIS IMAGE GREATLY ENHANCED IN THE WEST AND A NEW RESPECT FOR HIS FIRMNESS ESTABLISHED IN THE COMMUNIST CAMP.

10. "AND IT LEAVES THAILAND WITH NONE OF ITS PREVIOUS PROBLEMS ABOUT HOW IT IS GOIN TO FIT INTO THE NEW SCHEME OF THINGS  
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IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA SOLVED - BUT WITH A FEW NEW ONES ON ITS PLATE INSTEAD."  
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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** PRESS COMMENTS, MAYAGUEZ SS, NAVAL COMBAT OPERATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 22 MAY 1975  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
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**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
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